SHAKESPEARE

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

STEVENSON

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Titania. "While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy."

Bottom. "Scratch my head. Pease-blossom."

(*Act IV. Scene I.*)

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SHAKESPEARE'S
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

WITH ANNOTATIONS BY

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CONTENTS

The Life of Shakespeare	vii
The Theatre in Shakespeare's Time	viii
The Metre of Shakespeare's Plays	ix
Date; Sources of the Plot; Title	xi, xii
The Character of the Play	xii
The Theme of the Play	xii
Structure	xii
Sources of Interest	xiii
Important Characters	xiv
Time Analysis	xvi
Dramatis Personæ	xviii
Text of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream"	1
Notes on "A Midsummer-Night's Dream"	73
Staging a Play of Shakespeare	*See End of Book*

INTRODUCTION

The Life of Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire, on April 23rd, 1564. His father, John Shakespeare, was, in early life, a prosperous citizen of Stratford; his mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a well-to-do farmer of Warwickshire. Between the ages of seven and fourteen, Shakespeare probably attended the Stratford Grammar School, where, among other things, he received some training in Latin. In the year 1582, before he was nineteen years of age, he married Anne Hathaway, of Shottery, a woman who was some eight years his senior. Two of their children, Susanna and Judith, married, but only one of Shakespeare's grand-children reached maturity, and with her death in 1669 or 1670 the poet's family became extinct.

About the year 1586, Shakespeare left Stratford and went to London, where he appears to have obtained employment in some capacity in connection with the London theatres. About 1588 he began making over old plays, and in 1590 he probably wrote his first original drama. During the next twenty years, from 1590 to 1610, he produced play after play, and there is abundant evidence to show the esteem in which he was held by his contemporaries. In 1594 he was a member of the Earl of Leicester's Company of Players. When the Globe theatre was built in 1599, Shakespeare was one of the chief shareholders, and most of his plays were acted in this theatre.

In the meantime he had begun to acquire property in Stratford. In 1597 he had purchased the fine residence known as New Place, and from this time forward he appears to have looked more and more to Stratford as his home. About the year 1610 or 1611, he left London and returned to Stratford with the apparent intention of living in ease and retirement on the competence which he had accumulated. A few years later, however, his health failed, and he died in April, 1616, in his fifty-second year. He was buried in the chancel of the Church of the Holy Trinity, in Stratford.

Shakespeare's literary career is generally, for the sake of convenience, divided into four periods, according to the character of the plays which he produced:

(*a*) 1588-1594. This is largely a period of apprenticeship. To this period belong, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Richard III.*, and possibly *Romeo and Juliet*.

(*b*) 1594-1600. During this period most of the great comedies and the English historical plays were produced. To this period belong, *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, Richard II., Henry IV.*, and *Henry V.*

(*c*) 1600-1606. During this period most of the great tragedies were produced. To this period belong to *Julius Cæsar, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear* and *Macbeth.*

(*d*) 1606-1612. This is a period of later tragedy and of serious comedy. To this period belong, *Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Cymbeline, The Tempest* and *A Winter's Tale.*

Shakespeare himself took no pains to preserve his plays in permanent form. In all only fifteen of his plays were printed during his lifetime. In 1623, however, seven years after his death, a complete collection of his plays, thirty-six in all, were published in what is known as *The Folio of 1623.*

NOTE.—A folio page is about the size of an ordinary page of foolscap (about 13″ x 8½″), formed by folding the printer's sheet of paper once. When the printer's sheet is divided into four parts, the size of page is known as *quarto*; when divided into eight parts it is *octavo*; when divided into twelve parts it is *duodecimo.* The plays which were printed during Shakespeare's lifetime were published in quarto volumes, as distinguished from the later folios.

The Theatre in Shakespeare's Time.

The first theatre in London was built in 1576, and was known as *The Theatre.* Both this and other theatres which followed, The Curtain, The Globe, Blackfriars, and others, were built outside the city limits in order to escape the restrictions which were placed on the theatre by the Puritans. Most of the theatres were frame structures which were open to the sky, the only roofed part being the stage, or, at most, the raised seats next the walls. The better class of people occupied seats in the boxes overlooking the stage, or sat on stools or reclined on the rushes on the floor of the stage itself. The floor of the pit was merely hard earth, and it was not provided with seats. The admission to the pit was only a penny, and here the rabble crowded together, jostled each other, cracked nuts, ate apples, and laughed and joked and made sport of the actors.

The performance of the play began at three o'clock in the afternoon, and usually lasted two or three hours. The stage was hung with black

to indicate tragedy, and with blue to indicate comedy. There was no curtain to mark the opening and closing of the scenes, and beyond a few simple articles of furniture, no scenery of any account was used. At the back of the stage was a sort of gallery or balcony, which served the purpose of an upper room, or any place which was raised above the level of the ordinary scene. A change of place was indicated by a board with the name painted on it, as, London, Venice, Rome, Sardis. A light blue flag was used to indicate a day scene,—a dark flag to indicate a night scene. The women's parts in the play were acted by boys, and women did not appear even among the audience unless they wore masks. It was not until after the Restoration, that movable stage scenery was introduced, and that female parts were acted by women.

The Metre of Shakespeare's Plays.

The plays of Shakespeare are written in blank verse, that is, verse in which the lines do not rhyme. Each line contains five feet, consisting of two syllables each, with the accent falling on the second syllable. This measure is known as *iambic pentameter*.

When we mark the divisions between feet and indicate the accents in a line of poetry, we are said to *scan* it. Where the metre is perfectly regular, the scansion presents no difficulty; but very frequently the poet finds it necessary to vary his metre, either for the sake of avoiding monotony or for the purpose of producing certain special effects. The following are the most important of the variations which occur in the metre of Shakespeare:

(*a*) Sometimes, especially after a pause, the accent falls upon the first syllable instead of the second, as, for example:

Wo'e to / the ha'nd / that sh'ed / this co'st/ly blo'od!
What ju'dg/ment sh'all / I dre'ad, / d'oing / no wro'ng?

(*b*) An extra syllable is frequently added, especially at the end of a line, as, for example:

Art th'ou / some g'od, / some a'n/gel o'r / some de'v/il?
It dr'op/peth a's / the ge'n/tle ra'in / from he'av/en.

(*c*) Sometimes a foot contains two unaccented syllables, as, for example, in the following lines:

I am ne'v/er m'er/ry wh'en / I he'ar / sweet m'u/sic;
Let me s'ee, / let me s'ee, / was n'ot / the lea'f / turn'd dow'n?

In many cases, however, one of the unaccented syllables is elided, or slurred over in reading, as, for example, in the following:

Canst tho'u / not m'in/(i)ster t'o / a mi'nd / dise'ased?
We'll se'nd / Mark A'n / t(o)ny t'o / the Se'n/ate-ho'use.
Macb'eth / doth m'urder sle'ep, / the i'n/n(o)cent sl'eep.

(*d*) Certain groups of letters which are now pronounced as one syllable, are sometimes pronounced as two syllables in Shakespeare, as, for example, in the following:

The noble Brutus
Hath to'ld / you Ca'es/ar wa's / amb'it / i-o'us.
Misli'ke / me n'ot / for m'y / comple'x/i-o'n.

(*e*) It frequently happens that among the accented syllables in a line of poetry some have a stronger stress than others; and in order to scan a line, it is sometimes necessary to accent words which according to the sense have no stress, as, for example, in the case of the italicized words in the following:

Throw phy's/ic *to'* / the do'gs; / I'll no'ne / of i't!
There *i's* / a ti'de / in *th'e* / affa'irs / of me'n.

Rhyme is used by Shakespeare chiefly for the purpose of giving emphasis to those lines in which the speaker expresses a purpose or decision, and it very frequently marks the close of a scene. Shakespeare used rhyme much more freely in his earlier than in his later plays.

Prose. Shakespeare makes use of prose in his plays wherever the characters belong to a lower level of society, as, for example, the citizens in *Julius Cæsar*, the porter in *Macbeth*, and Lancelot Gobbo, the clown, in *The Merchant of Venice*. Prose is also used in letters, as, for example, that of Bellario in *The Merchant of Venice*, and for rhetorical speeches, as in the case of the paper of Artemidorus and the oration of Brutus in *Julius Cæsar*. Sometimes also, prose is used for the purpose of producing a special dramatic effect, as in the case of Casca's assumed bluntness of manner in *Julius Cæsar*; and in the scene in *The Merchant of Venice* where Shylock is "tortured" by Tubal; and in the sleep-walking scene in *Macbeth*.

Date of the Play.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream was probably written about the year 1594 or 1595. It is mentioned in a list of Shakespeare's comedies contained in a book called *Palladis Tamia*, or *Wit's Treasury*, by Francis Meres, published in 1598. But the style of the play itself seems to indicate that it was written some years earlier. It is probable that Titania's description of the unseasonable weather (Act II., Scene I., ll. 88-114) has reference to the year 1594, when the summer was unusually cold and rainy. It is supposed by some editors, also, that in the lines:

> "The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary;"

(Act V., Scene I., ll. 49-50), there is a reference to the death of the poet Robert Greene, who died in 1592; but this is, of course, a mere conjecture.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream was first published in 1600, in quarto form, and it was included in the edition of Shakespeare's works known as The First Folio Edition, published in 1623.

Sources of the Plot.

The plot of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is almost entirely Shakespeare's own invention. For the story of Theseus and Hippolyta, Shakespeare was indebted to Plutarch's *Lives* translated by Thomas North, and to *The Knight's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is to be found in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, with which Shakespeare was familiar through a translation by Arthur Golding, published in 1565. For the other incidents in the play, in the stories of the lovers, the fairies, and the clowns, Shakespeare drew very largely upon the popular beliefs and superstitions of his own day.

The Title.

The title *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is intended to suggest that the incidents of the play are unreal and fanciful and that the story is a mere "dream," not to be taken seriously. Puck in the epilogue asks the audience to forgive the defects of the play because it is only an idle dream; and at different points in the course of the story the characters themselves refer to their night's experiences as dreams.

The Character of the Play.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream is, properly speaking, not a regular comedy, but a "masque" or interlude. A masque is a short play which depends for its interest not so much upon plot and character as upon music, dancing, costumes, and scenic effects. It is supposed that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written as a wedding piece and was acted at the marriage of some nobleman to whom Shakespeare wished to do honour; and the pointed references to Queen Elizabeth in Act II., Scene I., would seem to indicate that she was present upon the occasion.

The Theme of the Play.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream is one of a group of early plays of Shakespeare in which love in some of its phases is the central theme. In this play Shakespeare treats in general of the fickleness and inconstancy of love. The lovers are types of all that is uncertain and inconstant in human love. The fairies, who are mere shadows of "mortals," resemble them in this also, and Oberon and Titania chide each other mutually for being light of love. Of all the lovers in the play, Theseus alone is strong and steadfast. His love for Hippolyta is not the result of a mere freakish fancy, for he has "wooed her with his sword" and "won her love doing her injuries!" But he, too, has experienced the feverish passions of youth, and Oberon, in chiding Titania, recites instances of the unfaithfulness of Theseus to his former loves.

Structure.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream combines four different stories, or rather episodes,—the stories of Theseus and Hippolyta, the lovers, the fairies, and the clowns; and it includes in addition

the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. These different episodes are combined in one plot through the fact that they are all bound up with the marriage of Theseus. The play opens with a reference to the wedding, which is to take place four days later. Hermia is required to give an answer to Theseus and Egeus upon the same day. The fairies have come "from the farthest steppe of India" to give to Theseus and Hippolyta "joy and prosperity." The play upon which Bottom and his companions are so seriously engaged is to be acted before Theseus "on his wedding day at night." By a series of accidental circumstances, too, the four stories are bound still more closely together. It so happens that it is in the same wood, "a mile without the town," that the lovers have agreed to meet and that the clowns have arranged to rehearse their play. Here, too, the fairies have come to dance in the moonlight, and in the early morning it chances that Theseus and Hippolyta have come hither "to observe the rite of May." And so it happens that the fairies have by chance come into contact with the lovers and the "hempen homespuns", and that Theseus meets with the lovers again upon the day of his wedding. In the last Act of the play all the episodes find their natural conclusion in the palace of the Duke. Theseus and Hippolyta and the other lovers look on at the acting of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by the company of clowns, and at midnight "by the dull and drowsy fire" the fairies come to bless the house of Theseus. Because the play as a whole has no distinct plot there is no real climax in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The complication, such as it is, is completed in Act III., Scenes I. and II., and the dénouement begins in Act III., Scene II., when Oberon undertakes to undo the mischief which has been caused by the "shrewd and knavish" Puck.

Sources of Interest.

In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* the thread of the plot is in reality very slight. The marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta gives the audience little concern. The inconstancy of the lovers is amusing but does not hold the serious attention of the audience. The quarrel of Oberon and Titania is merely the result of a whimsical fancy, and the clowns are amusing chiefly because of their ignorance and their mistakes. The

main interest in the play lies partly in the series of humorous situations which grow out of the use of the magic flower, and partly in the absurd attempts of Bottom and his companions to prepare their interlude and present it before the duke. And aside from the incidents themselves there is much that is entertaining in the mere externals of the play—the music and dancing, the costumes and scenery; the moonlight scenes in the enchanted wood, the mingling of fairies and clowns, of mythical heroes and inconstant lovers. There are few plays that give greater opportunities for striking effects in scenery and costume than *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

Important Characters.

The characters in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* fall into four groups—Theseus and Hippolyta, the fairies, the lovers, and the clowns.

Theseus and Hippolyta. Theseus as he appears in the play seems to be a sketch, in outline, of Shakespeare's ideal ruler. Everything in the play shows that he is a fully matured, dignified, self-possessed prince. He has passed through the period of wilder youth; he has already fought and overcome great enemies; and his experiences have strengthened him and given dignity and poise to his character. Yet he has not lost his zest for living; he enjoys the chase, and he enters heartily into the humour of the interlude. His relations towards his subjects, too, are those of the ideal monarch of the present day, to whom

> "Never anything can be amiss
> When simpleness and duty tender it."

If, as is commonly supposed, Queen Elizabeth saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream* acted, she could find in the character of Theseus nothing to offend, but on the other hand much to imitate and admire.

The outline of the character of Hippolyta is even more slight than that of Theseus; but as she appears in the play she is the feminine counterpart of Theseus, a mature woman of strong mind, but at the same time with womanly sympathies.

The Fairies are irresponsible pleasure-loving beings, who resemble spoiled children more than mature men and women.

They are lacking in the higher mental and moral qualities of human beings, but they delight in beautiful things of nature and the senses. Gervinus says of them :—"Airy and swift, like the moon, the fairies circle the earth; they avoid the sunlight without fearing it, and seek the darkness; they love the moon, and dance in her beams; and above all they delight in the dusk and twilight, the very season for dreams, whether waking or sleeping. They send and bring dreams to mortals....They lead a luxurious, merry life, given up to the pleasures of the senses; the secrets of nature and the powers of flowers and herbs are confided to them. To sleep in flowers, lulled with dances and songs, with the wings of painted butterflies to fan the moon-beams from their eyes, this is their pleasure; the gorgeous apparel of flowers and dewdrops is their joy....They harmonise with nightingales and butterflies; they wage war with all ugly creatures, with hedgehogs, spiders, and bats; dancing, play, and song are their greatest pleasures; they steal lovely children, and substitute changelings; they torment decrepit old age, toothless gossips, and the awkward company of the players of Pyramus and Thisbe, but they love and recompense all that is pure and pretty....The only pain which agitates these beings is jealousy....They are full of wanton tricks and railleries, playing upon themselves and upon mortals pranks which never hurt, but which often torment. This is especially the property of Puck."

The Lovers are little more than puppets,—mere conventional figures with no separate individuality. Between Lysander and Demetrius there is little to choose. Hermia and Helena are colourless figures, with few distinguishing marks to separate them. Hermia, we learn from the play, is small and dark-complexioned and shrewish; Helena, on the other hand, is tall and fair, and more gentle and timid in disposition. Otherwise there is so little difference between them that they might change places in the play without in any way affecting the character of the plot.

The Clowns provide the humorous element in the play. Their humour consists partly in the absurd efforts of the mechanics to stage and act their interlude, and partly in the fact that the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is in itself a

burlesque or "take-off" in which Shakespeare ridicules the extravagant features in many of the plays in his own time. Of the company of clowns, Bottom is the only character with a distinct individuality. In his case the humour lies in his supreme ignorance coupled with his colossal egotism. Peter Quince is nominally manager of the company of amateurs, but from the outset Bottom usurps this position. He is so possessed with the idea of his own importance that it is simply impossible for him to occupy a second place. He wishes to play every part in the interlude, and on everything that is mentioned the irrepressible Bottom expresses an opinion. When Puck transforms Bottom by means of the ass's head the situation is rendered all the more humorous, because in wearing the ass's head he appears in his true character. But even under this transformation his egotism does not forsake him, and he receives the attentions of Titania and her fairy attendants with the utmost complacency. No doubt the assurance and self-conceit of Bottom are all the greater because he finds himself the centre of an admiring company of fellow mechanics, who as a result of their own ignorance are ready to take him at his own estimation. To them he appears as "a paragon for a sweet voice," and "he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens."

Time Analysis.

At the very beginning of the play Theseus states that his marriage to Hippolyta is to take place in four days' time, and Hippolyta speaks further of the four days and four nights that must pass before "the night of our solemnities." And yet when we follow the action of the play in detail we find that in reality it occupies not more than three days and three nights. Upon the first day Theseus speaks of his approaching marriage and gives his decision regarding Hermia, and on this same evening the clowns meet to arrange for the rehearsal of their interlude. On the second night, as agreed (Act I., Sc. I., ll. 209-13), the lovers meet in the wood. The clowns also meet (Act I., Sc. II., ll. 90-94) to rehearse their play. The events of Act II., Act III., and Act IV., Sc. I., ll. 1-102, take place during this night. Upon the morning of the third day Theseus and

Hippolyta celebrate the rites of May-day. Then all repair to the temple in Athens, where the marriage ceremonies are performed. In the evening the play of Pyramus and Thisbe is acted, and at midnight the fairies come to bless the house of Theseus.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.
EGEUS, father to Hermia.
LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, } In love with Hermia.
PHILOSTRATE, Master of the Revels to Theseus.
QUINCE, a carpenter.
SNUG, a joiner.
BOTTOM, a weaver.
FLUTE, a bellows-mender.
SNOUT, a tinker.
STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.
HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.
HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, King of the fairies.
TITANIA, Queen of the fairies.
PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.
PEASE-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, } fairies.

Other fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE:—*Athens and a wood near it.*

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, *and* Attendants.

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,
Long withering out a young man's revenue.

Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*
Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!
The. Thanks, good Egeus: what's the news with thee?
Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child:
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchang'd love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung,
With feigning voice, verses of feigning love;
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats,—messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart;
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your Grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.
The. What say you, Hermia? be advis'd, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
One that compos'd your beauties; yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted, and within his power

To leave the figure, or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
Her. So is Lysander.
The. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
The. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.
Her. I do entreat your Grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your Grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.
The. Either to die the death, or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether, if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessèd they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd
Than that which, withering on the virgin thorn,
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness.
Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke

My soul consents not to give sovereignty.

The. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon,—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me,
For everlasting bond of fellowship,—
Upon that day either prepare to die
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
Or on Diana's altar to protest
For aye austerity and single life.

Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia; and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.

Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.

Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him;
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am belov'd of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I, then, prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,

My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
Which by no means we may extenuate—
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business
Against our nuptial; and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.

Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.

[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*

Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?

Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of mine eyes.

Lys. Ay me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,—

Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low!

Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—

Her. O spite! too old to be engag'd to young!

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—

Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes!

Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;

Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say, "Behold!"
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If, then, true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts, and dreams, and sighs,
Wishes, and tears, poor fancy's followers.

Lys. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;
And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lov'st me, then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow;
By his best arrow with the golden head;
By the simplicity of Venus' doves;
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves;
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Trojan under sail was seen;
By all the vows that ever men have broke,

In number more than ever women spoke;
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA.

Her. God speed fair Helena! whither away?

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn-buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia! ere I go,
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I 'ld give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look; and with what art
You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart!

Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.

Hel. O, that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!

Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.

Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!

Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.

Hel. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!

Her. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,—
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,—
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.

Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Hermia.*

Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*

Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities.
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;

And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgment taste;
Wings, and no eyes, figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is Love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjur'd every where:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolv'd, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on; then read the names of the actors; and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is *The most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.*

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest; yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

> The raging rocks
> And shivering shocks
> Shall break the locks
> Of prison gates;
> And Phibbus' car,
> Shall shine from far,
> And make and mar
> The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein; a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too: I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, "Thisne, Thisne;" "Ah, Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!" 49

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father; myself, Thisby's father; Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted. 60

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, "Let him roar again, let him roar again."

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all. 71

All. That would hang us, every mother's son

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus. 81

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow. 88

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you, and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace-wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight: there will we rehearse,—for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not. 98

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold, or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II

SCENE I. *A wood near Athens.*

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, *and* PUCK.

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be:
In their gold coats spots you see;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours:
I must go seek some dewdrops here,
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits; I'll be gone:
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she, as her attendant, hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;
She never had so sweet a changeling:
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:
And now they never meet in grove or green,

By fountain clear or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves, for fear,
Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow: are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern,
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck:
Are not you he?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,
Neighing in likeness of a filly foal;
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab;
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from her, and down topples she,
And "tailor" cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth, and neeze, and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Oberon. "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania."

Act II. Scene I.

Enter, from one side, OBERON, *with his Train; from the other,* TITANIA, *with hers.*

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.
Tita. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.
Obe. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?
Tita. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn, and versing love
To amorous Phyllida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.
Obe. How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia?
And make him with fair Æglé break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?
Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea

Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
Have every pelting river made so proud,
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat; and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud;
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green,
For lack of tread, are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter here;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose;
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:
And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.

Obe. Do you amend it, then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.

Tita. Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood;
Which she with pretty and with swimming gait
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake I do rear up her boy;
And for her sake I will not part with him.

Oberon. How long within this wood intend you stay?

Tita. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
If you will patiently dance in our round,
And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.

[*Exit Titania with her Train.*

Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw—but thou couldst not—
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts:
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I show'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
Will make or man or woman madly dote
Upon the next live creature that it sees.
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
In forty minutes. [*Exit.*

Obe. Having once this juice,
I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
The next thing then she waking looks upon,
Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
On meddling monkey or on busy ape,
She shall pursue it with the soul of love:
And ere I take this charm off from her sight,—
As I can take it with another herb,—

I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him.*

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen into this wood;
And here am I, and wood within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.
Dem. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you I do not nor I cannot love you?
Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,—
And yet a place of high respect with me,—
Than to be used as you use your dog?
Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit;
For I am sick when I do look on thee.
Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.
Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,

To leave the city, and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege: for that
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

Dem. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.

Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be chang'd:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger,—bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues, and valour flies!

Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd, and were not made to woo.

[*Exit Demetrius.*

I'll follow thee, and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care, that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter TITANIA, *with her Train.*

Tita. Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;
Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,

To make my small elves coats; and some keep back
The clamorous owl, that nightly hoots and wonders
At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG.

First Fairy. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;
Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby; lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

Second Fairy. Weaving spiders come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near,
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody, &c.

First Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

Enter OBERON.

Obe. What thou see'st when thou dost wake,

[*Squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids.*

Do it for thy true-love take;
Love and languish for his sake:
Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,

Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And, to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.
Her. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;
For I upon this bank will rest my head.
Lys. Here is my bed: sleep give thee all his rest!
Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd!
[*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence! who is here?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear:
This is he my master said
Despised the Athenian maid;
And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
[*Squeezes the flower on Lysander's eyelids.*
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wak'st, let love forbid

Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So awake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit.*

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA *running.*

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.

Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit.*

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, whersoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.

Lys. [*Starting up*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.

Transparent Helena! Nature shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.

Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So, I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will,
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.

Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong,—good sooth, you do,—
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refus'd,
Should of another therefore be abus'd! [*Exit.*

Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings;
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive;
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!

And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen, and to be her knight! [*Exit.*

Her. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, remov'd? Lysander! lord:
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh:
Either death or you I'll find immediately. [*Exit.*

ACT III

Scene I. *The wood. Titania lying asleep.*

Enter Quince, Snug, Bottom, Flute, Snout, *and* Starveling.

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What say'st thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write me a prologue; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver: this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves: to bring in,—God shield us!—a lion among ladies is a most dreadful thing; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living; and we ought to look to it.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect, —"Ladies,"—or, "Fair ladies,—I would wish you,"—or, "I would request you,"—or, "I would entreat you,—not to fear, not to tremble; my life for yours. If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life: no, I am no such thing; I am a man as other men are:" and there, indeed, let him name his name, and tell them plainly, he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things,—that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snug. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar! look in the almanac; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing: we must have a wall in the great chamber; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snug. You can never bring in a wall. What say you Bottom?

Bot. Some man or other must present Wall: and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some roughcast about him, to signify wall; and let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin; when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake; and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK *behind.*

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen?

What, a play toward! I'll be an auditor;
An actor too, perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Pyr. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,—

Quin. "Odours, odours."

Pyr. —— odours savours sweet:
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er play'd here.
[*Aside, and exit.*

This. Must I speak now?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

This. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal, and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. "Ninus' tomb," man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus, enter: your cue is past; it is, "never tire."

This. O, As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*

Pyr. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine:—

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!
[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

Puck. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier:

Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit Snout.*

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit.*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*

The ousel-cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,—

Tita. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings*]

The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

for indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry "cuckoo" never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
I am a spirit of no common rate:
The summer still doth tend upon my state;
And I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee;
And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
And sing, while thou on pressed flowers dost sleep:
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Pease-blossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustard-seed!

Enter PEASE-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARD-SEED.

Peas. Ready.
Cob. And I.
Moth. And I.
Mus. And I.
All Four Where shall we go?

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;

Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes:
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal!

Cob. Hail!

Moth. Hail!

Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worship's mercy, heartily. I beseech your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman?

Peas. Pease-blossom.

Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Pease-blossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustard-seed.

Bot. Good Master Mustard-seed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Mustard-seed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter OBERON.

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awak'd;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.
Here comes my messenger.

Enter PUCK.

How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?
Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thickskin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented in their sport,
Forsook his scene, and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,
Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,

Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky;
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries, and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some, sleeves,—some, hats;—from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment so it came to pass,
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.
Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?
Puck. I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he wak'd, of force she must be ey'd.

Enter HERMIA *and* DEMETRIUS.

Obe. Stand close: this is the same Athenian.
Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.
Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.
Her. Now I but chide: but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day

As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bor'd; and that the moon
May through the centre creep, and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look,—so dead, so grim.
Dem. So should the murder'd look; and so should I,
Pierc'd through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.
Her. What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?
Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.
Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.
Dem. You spend your passion on a mispris'd mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.
Her. I pray thee, tell me, then, that he is well.
Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?
Her. A privilege, never to see me more;
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit.*

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here, therefore, for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd, and not a false turn'd true.

Puck. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is, and pale of cheer
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

Puck. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit.*

Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,

[*Squeezes the flower on Demetrius's eyelids.*

Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Obe. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Puck. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter HELENA *and* LYSANDER.

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?

Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.

Lys. I had no judgment when to her I swore.

Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.

Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.

Dem. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!

To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
Hel. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;
And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin, and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.
Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love, and will do till my death.
Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.
Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:

If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.

Lys. Helen, it is not so.

Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?

Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.
Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?

Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.

Her. I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.

Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn
To follow me, and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,
Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,

But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unlov'd?
This you should pity rather than despise.
Her. I understand not what you mean by this.
Hel. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks;
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly mine own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.
Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!
Hel. O excellent!
Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.
Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.
Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.
Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.
Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.
Dem. Quick, come!
Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?
Lys. Away, you Ethiop!
Dem. No, no, sir;
Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!

Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!

Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this,
Sweet love?

Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathèd medicine! hated potion, hence!

Her. Do you not jest?

Hel. Yes, sooth! and so do you.

Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.

Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.

Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love?
Am not I Hermia? are you not Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you lov'd me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me,—O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?

Lys. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, of doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee, and love Helena.

Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?

Hel. Fine, i'faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear

Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!
Her. Puppet! why so? ay, that way goes the game.
Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urg'd her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.
Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she's something lower than myself,
That I can match her.
Her. Lower! hark, again.
Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence, and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back,
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.

Her. Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?
Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.
Her. What, with Lysander?
Hel. With Demetrius.
Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.
Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.
Hel. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!
She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.
Her. Little again! nothing but low and little!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.
Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.
Dem. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone; speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.
Lys. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.
Dem. Follow! nay, I'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*
Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you:
Nay, go not back.
Hel. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray;
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*

Obe. This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
Or else committ'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
And so far am I glad it so did sort,
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:
Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog, as black as Acheron;
And lead these testy rivals so astray,
As one come not within another's way.
Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
And from each other look thou lead them thus,
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with his might,
And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,
And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;

And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

Puck. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste,
For Night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger;
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards: damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light,
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the Morning's love have oft made sport;
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt-green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day. [*Exit.*

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where are thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.

Puck. Here, villain, drawn and ready. Where art thou?

Lys. I will be with thee straight.

Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*

Demetrius. "Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,"
Act III. Scene II.

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?

Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defil'd
That draws a sword on thee.

Dem. Yea, art thou there?

Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.
[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;
That fall'n am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down*] Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy gray light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.*

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS.

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why com'st thou not?

Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?

Puck. Come hither: I am here.

Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:

Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enters HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe;
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers;
I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. On the ground
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

[*Squeezing the herb on Lysander's eyelids.*

When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *The wood.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, *and* HERMIA, *lying asleep.*

Enter TITANIA *and* BOTTOM; PEASE-BLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARD-SEED, *and other* Fairies *attending*; OBERON *behind unseen.*

Tita. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where's Pease-blossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head Pease-blossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the

action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustard-seed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustard-seed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

Mus. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music: let's have the tongs and the bones. [*Rough music.*

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay; good hay, sweet hay hath no fellow.

Tita. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt Fairies.*
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*

Enter Puck.

Obe. [*Advancing*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her, and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes,
Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail,
When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child:
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair,
And think no more of this night's accidents,
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
Be as thou wast wont to be;

[*Touching her eyes with an herb.*

See as thou wast wont to see:
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and bles éd power.

Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep!

[*Music, still.*

Puck. Now, when thou wak'st, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Puck. Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

Tita. Come, my lord; and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night,
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground. [*Exeunt.*

[*Horns winded within.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and Train.*

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds:
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an Attend.*
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd, like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth-like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe

The rite of May; and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns. [*Horns and shout within. Lysander, Demetrius, Helena, and Hermia awake and start up.*

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:
Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up.
I know you two are rival enemies:
How comes this gentle concord in the world,
That hatred is so far from jealousy,
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,
Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear
I cannot truly say how I came here;
But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,
And now I do bethink me, so it is,—
I came with Hermia hither: our intent
Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,
Without the peril of the Athenian law,—

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:
I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me,
You of your wife, and me of my consent,
Of my consent that she would be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
Of this their purpose hither to this wood;

And I in fury hither follow'd them,
Fair Helena in fancy following me.
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—
But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,
Melted as the snow, seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gaud,
Which in my childhood I did dote upon;
And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object, and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena. To her, my lord,
Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:
But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;
But, as in health, come to my natural taste,
Now do I wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purpos'd hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens! three and three
We'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, Hippolyta. [*Exeunt The., Hip., Eye., and Train.*

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own and not mine own.

Dem. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

Her. Yea; and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then, we are awake: let's follow him;
And, by the way, let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.* 200

Bot. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, "Most fair Pyramus." Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream,—past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of a play before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [*Exit.* 218

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house.*

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say paragon: a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snug. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet Bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a-day during his life; he could not have scaped sixpence a-day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a-day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a-day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred.

In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,—
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy:

Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush suppos'd a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigur'd so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images,
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here comes the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA.

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Lys. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgment have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper.*

The. [*Reads*] "The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp."
We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
[*Reads*] "The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage."
That is an old device; and it was play'd

When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.
[*Reads*] "The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary."
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.
[*Reads*] "A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth."
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehears'd, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never labour'd in their minds till now;
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd memories
With this same play against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain
To do you service.

The. I will hear that play;

For never any thing can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.

[*Exit Philostrate.*

Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharg'd,
And duty in his service perishing.

The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing

Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practis'd accent in their fears,
And, in conclusion, dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity,
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.

Phil. So please your Grace, the Prologue is address'd.

The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter QUINCE *for the* Prologue.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider, then, we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand, and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.

Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.

Hip. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.

The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION.

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady, Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper: at the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,
Presenteth Moonshine; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain:
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast;

And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain,
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord: one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall;
And such a wall as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast, and this stone, doth show
That I am that same wall; the truth is so:
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!

[*Wall holds up his fingers.*

Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Curs'd be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. "Deceiving me" is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Enter THISBE.

This. O wall, full often has thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kissed thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

This. My love! thou art my love, I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace:
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.

[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part dischargèd so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit.*

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that e'er I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in, a man and a lion.

Enter LION *and* MOONSHINE.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion-fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon: I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Enter THISBE.

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion. [*Roaring*] O— [*Thisbe runs off.*

Dem. Well roared, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion tears Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*

The. Well moused, Lion.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams:
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to taste of truest Thisby sight.

Hippolyta. "Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace."

Act V. Scene I.

But stay,—O spite !—
But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here !
Eyes, do you see ?
How can it be ?
O dainty duck ! O dear !
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood ?
Approach, ye Furies fell !
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum ;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O, wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame ?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear :
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound ;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus ;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop : [*Stabs himself.*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled ;
My soul is in the sky :
Tongue, lose thy light ;
Moon, take thy flight : [*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him ; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than an ace, man ; for he is dead ; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us,—she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she moans, *videlicet*:—

This.

Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself.*
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone.

[*A dance by two of the Clowns.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn,
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguil'd
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.

Now it is the time of night
That the graves, all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,
From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom, before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA, *with their Train.*

Obe. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire;
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.

Tita. First, rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note:
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place. [*Song and dance.*

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;

Oberon. " . . each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace;"
Act V. Scene I.

And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away; make no stay;
Meet me all by break of day.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and Train.*

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here,
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend:
If you pardon, we will mend:
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long,
Else the Puck a liar call:
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*

NOTES.

Act I.—Scene I.

At the beginning of this scene we learn that the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta is to take place in four days' time; and the story of the play has to do with the incidents that take place during these four days. Philostrate, the master of the revels, is sent to "stir up the Athenian youth to merriment"; and at the same time Theseus warns the wayward Hermia that during the four days' interval she must decide whether or not she will yield obedience to her father's will.

This scene suggests at the same time the theme of the play, the fickleness of youthful love. On the one hand we have the love story of the mature, self-controlled Theseus, and on the other, the changeable fancies of the youthful lovers in the story.

1. **our nuptial hour.** The hour of our wedding.

3. **methinks.** It seems to me.

4. **lingers my desires.** Delays the fulfilment of my desires.

5. **step-dame.** Step-mother.

dowager. A widow with an income from her late husband's estate.

6. The young man's revenue is reduced (withered), because a part of it goes to the support of his father's widow.

9-10. **the moon,** etc. The new moon, which is crescent shaped.

11. **our solemnities.** Wedding ceremony.

13. **pert.** Lively.

15. This pale fellow (melancholy) is not suited to our revelry. *Companion* was used in Shakespeare's time in a contemptuous sense.

19. Both *pomp* and *triumph* suggest showy pageants. Among the Romans a triumph was a solemn procession in which a conqueror entered the city in state.

20. **duke.** Ruler. Theseus was a king, but Chaucer speaks of him as a duke, or leader.

27. **bosom.** Heart.

31. **feigning voice.** Pretending to express love.

32. Stealthily impressed her with love for you.

fantasy. Fancy, which in Shakespeare's time was used in the sense of *love*.

33. **gauds.** Trifling toys, ornaments.

conceits. Fanciful or ingenious trifles.

34. **Knacks.** Knick-knacks, trifles.

34-5. **messengers of strong prevailment.** Love-tokens which have a strong influence.

36. **filch'd.** Stolen.

39. **Be it so.** If it be so.

42. Supply *that* before *As*.

44. **our law.** According to the laws of Solon (638 B.C.) parents had the power of life or death over their children.

45. **Immediately.** Expressly.

in that case. To meet a case such as this.

46. **advis'd.** Warned.

48. **compos'd.** Formed.

51. **disfigure it.** Destroy the image, obliterate it.

54. **in this kind.** In a matter of marriage, considered as a husband.

60. How far my modesty may be at stake.

67. **question your desires.** Examine your feelings.

68. **Know of.** Inquire into.

your blood. Your passions.

70. **the livery of a nun.** The garb of a nun.

71. **in shady cloister mew'd.** Shut up in the dim convent. Literally, a cloister is a covered walk or passage overlooking the courtyard of a monastery.

73. **cold fruitless moon.** Diana, the moon-goddess, is represented as a virgin, knowing nothing of earthly love (hence *cold*), and having no children (hence *fruitless*).

74. **master so their blood.** Control their passions in this way.

76. **earthlier happy.** Happier on earth.

the rose distill'd. The rose which has been gathered and whose perfume has been extracted.

80. **virgin patent.** Privilege of remaining a virgin.

81. **Unto his lordship, etc.** To the authority (lordship) of him to whose unwished-for bondage my soul refuses to yield. The antecedent of *whose* is implied in *his* (=of him).

84. The day when our agreement (bond) as husband and wife is made legal (sealed) by marriage.

88. **as he would.** As your father wishes.

89-90. To vow (protest) upon the altar of the virgin goddess, Diana, that you will live the strict (austere) life of a virgin.

92. **crazed title.** Title with a flaw in it.

98. **estate.** Bequeath.

99-100. As noble in birth, and as wealthy.

101-2. My fortunes are equal if not superior (with vantage) to those of Demetrius.

103. **avouch it to his head.** Declare it to his face.

109. **Devoutly.** With the utmost devotion.

in idolatry. To the point of idolizing him.

110. **spotted and inconstant.** Wicked and faithless.

113. **self-affairs.** My own affairs.

116. **schooling.** Instructions.

120. **extenuate.** Soften, relax.

122. **what cheer.** How is it with you?

125. **Against.** In preparation for.

nuptial. In modern English the plural *nuptials* is used.

126. Something that closely concerns you.

127. We follow you not only because it is our duty, but because we wish to do so.

129. **How chance.** How does it come?

130. **Belike.** Likely.

131. **Beteem.** Supply in abundance.

132. **Ay me!** Ah me! Alas!

for aught. To judge from anything.

135. **different in blood.** The lovers were not of the same social rank.

136. How unfortunate that one of the lovers should be too high in rank to be so madly in love with one of lower birth.

137. **misgraffed.** Misgrafted; wrongly mated.

139. **stood upon.** Depended upon.

145. **collied.** Coal-black.

146. **a spleen.** A sudden movement, a sudden fit of passion.

149. **confusion.** Destruction.

150. **cross'd.** Thwarted in their plans.

151. It is something that fate has decreed.

152. Let us teach ourselves to be patient in this trial.

153. **a customary cross.** A vexation that is common to all.

154. **As due to love.** Belonging to love as much.

155. **poor fancy's followers.** Which usually accompany love (fancy). The word *poor* suggests that one who is in love is to be pitied.

156. **A good persuasion.** Well argued.

158. **revenue.** Accented on the second syllable.

160. **respects.** Looks upon.

165. **without.** Outside.

167. To perform the customary rites of May-day. May-day (May 1st) was, in former times, observed as a holiday and given over to games and festivities appropriate to the day.

170. **the golden head.** According to myth, some of Cupid's arrows were tipped with gold and others with lead. The golden arrows were supposed to inspire love, while the leaden ones were supposed to drive it away.

171. **simplicity.** Innocence.

Venus' doves. The chariot of Venus, goddess of love, was drawn by doves.

172. There may be an allusion in this line, to the cestus or girdle of Venus, which was supposed to excite love.

173-4. Aeneas, the Trojan hero, in the course of his wanderings after the fall of Troy, visited Carthage. Dido, the queen, fell in love with him, and upon his departure from Carthage she took her life by throwing herself upon a funeral pyre.

180. **whither away?** Where are you going?

181. **that fair.** That word "fair."

182. **your fair.** Your fairness, or beauty.

183. **lode-star.** The polar star, which *leads* sailors.

184. **tuneable.** Tuneful.

186. **favour.** Good looks, outward appearance.

187. **Yours would I catch.** I should wish to catch your "favour."

190. **bated.** Excepted, left out.

191. **translated.** Changed, transformed.

207. Athens has been turned "unto a hell" because her father Egeus will not permit her to see Lysander.

209. **Phœbe.** The moon; a feminine formed from Phœbus, the sun.

212. **still.** Always.

219. **stranger companies.** Companies of strangers.

223. **lovers' food.** The sight of one another.

225. **dote.** May Demetrius dote; subjunctive.

223. **other some.** Certain other people.

231. **So I.** So do I err.

admiring of. *Of* is redundant.

232. **holding no quantity.** Insignificant in appearance.

236. Love's mind has not the smallest particle (taste) of judgment.

237. **figure unheedy haste.** Represent heedless haste.

239. He is so often deceived in choosing.

241. **is perjur'd.** Breaks his oath.

242. **eyne.** Eyes; an older plural.

249. **a dear expense.** A reward for which I shall have to pay dearly,—since it is not to my advantage that Demetrius and Hermia should meet.

250. **to enrich my pain.** To compensate for my pain by being able to see Demetrius for so long a time.

Scene II.

We are told in the latter part of the play that the company of-would-be actors who assembled in Quince's house are,

> Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
> Which never laboured in their minds till now;

and it is the supreme ignorance of the clowns that constitutes the chief humour of the scenes in which they appear. In making the audience laugh at these clowns, however, Shakespeare is in reality holding up to ridicule the absurdities in many of the plays of his own time.

2. **You were best.** It would be best for you. *You* is dative.

generally. He means "separately."

3. **scrip.** Written list.

4. **which.** In Shakespeare's time the conjunctive pronoun *which* was used with reference to persons as well as to things.

5. **interlude.** Entertainment.

10. **grow to a point.** Come to an end.

11. The title is, no doubt, a take-off on the absurd titles of some of the plays in Shakespeare's time.

15. **spread yourselves.** Spread yourselves out; do not stand so close together.

16. **Bottom, the weaver.** The word *bottom* was a technical name for a ball of yarn used in weaving.

19. **tyrant.** A ranting swaggering character, common in the plays of the time.

21. **ask.** Require, demand.

23. **condole.** Lament.

23-4. **To the rest.** Name the rest of the characters.

25. **Ercles.** Hercules; a blustering character, common to many plays.

to tear a cat, to make all split. Proverbial expressions, meaning to rant in a violent fashion. The expression, "to make all split" was used by sailors in speaking of ships dashed to pieces on the rocks.

27-31. A burlesque imitation of the senseless rant that was found in many plays.

31. **Phibbus'.** Phœbus, the god of the sun.

37. **bellows-mender.** One who mended the bellows of organs; hence the name *Flute.*

40. **a wandering knight.** A knight-*errant.*

42-5. In Shakespeare's day the female parts were played by boys. It was not until after the Restoration that female actors appeared on the stage. Women who attended the theatres usually wore masks; hence the suggestion that Flute "play it in a mask."

45. **will.** Wish.

46. **An.** If.

60. **fitted.** Arranged.

75. **aggravate.** Increase. Bottom, of course, means the opposite.

76. **roar you.** The word *you* is used colloquially.

79. **proper.** Handsome.

85. **discharge.** Perform.

your. Used colloquially to suggest that the things of which he is speaking are familiar to his hearers.

86. **orange-tawny.** Dark yellow.

purple-in-grain. Purple dyed in the grain,—that is, in fast colours.

87. **crown-colour.** Light yellow, the colour of a gold coin.

89. A pun on the word *crowns,*—used here in reference to bald-heads.

92. **con.** To learn.

95. **dogged.** Followed closely.

97. **properties.** Stage equipment.

100. **obscenely.** Probably used for *obscurely.*

103. hold, or cut bow-strings. Keep your appointment whatever may happen. Archers, no doubt, often pledged themselves to keep an engagement on the penalty of having their bow-strings cut if they failed to appear.

Questions.

1. What do the opening speeches of Theseus lead the audience to anticipate as to the mood of the play?

2. What is the object of the dramatist in providing that Theseus should give Hermia until the next new moon to decide whether or not she will obey her father's will?

3. In Scene I., ll. 123-6, Theseus bids Demetrius and Egeus to go with him. This is a forced and unnatural dramatic expedient. What purpose is served by it?

4. Show how Lysander's statement that "the course of true love never did run smooth" applies to the fortunes of the lovers in this scene.

5. (*a*) In Scene II., in what way does the conceit and self-importance of Bottom show itself?

(*b*) What means does Quince use to hold him in check?

6. What reasons are given in Act I. as to why (*a*) the lovers, and (*b*) the clowns, should arrange to meet in the wood?

Act II.—Scene I.

In Act I. the lovers Hermia and Lysander had agreed to meet in a wood "a league without the town"; and to this wood Helena and Demetrius had determined to follow them. The clowns too, had arranged to rehearse their play in the same wood. Now at the beginning of Act II. we find that the wood is haunted by fairies, who have come hither to bring "joy and prosperity" to the wedding of Theseus and Hippolyta. But with fairies just as with earthly lovers, "the course of true love never does run smooth." Oberon and Titania have quarrelled; and it is to their quarrel that the confusion which overtakes the lovers and clowns alike in the following scenes, is due.

3. Thorough. Through.

4. pale. A boundary, such as a fence or a hedge.

7. moon's sphere. According to the old belief the moon was fixed in a hollow sphere or globe which moved around the earth.

9. dew. Water.

her orbs. Rings or circles of rank grass which were supposed to be caused by the fairies dancing in a ring. In reality these fairy-rings are due to a fungus growth which fertilizes the soil and causes the grass to grow rankly.

10. pensioners. Attendants. Queen Elizabeth had a body-guard of gentleman-pensioners who wore gorgeous uniforms, adorned with gold braid and jewels.

12. rubies, fairy favours. Jewels, the gifts (favours) of the fairies.

13. In those spots (freckles) the fragrance (savours) of the cowslip is found.

16. lob. Lubber, clumsy fellow. The fairies or elves were so small that they were able to "creep into acorn cups and hide them there"; but Puck or Robin Goodfellow, according to popular superstition, was a fairy of a coarser mould.

20. passing fell and wrath. Exceedingly fierce and wrathful.

23. changeling. It was a common superstition that the fairies carried off children, leaving elves in exchange for them.

25. trace. Travel, wander through.

26. perforce. By force.

30. square. Quarrel.

33. shrewd. Mischievous.

36. quern. Hand-mill for grinding grain.

37. bootless. With no results.

38. barm. Froth, showing that the drink had fermented.

40. Hobgoblin. *Hob* is a corruption of *Robin*.

46. filly foal. A young mare.

47. a gossip's bowl. A gossip was originally a sponsor at a christening; then the word came to apply to those who engaged in idle talk at these festivities, and finally to the idle talk itself.

48. **crab.** Crab-apple, floating in the spiced ale.

50. **dewlap.** The loose skin of the neck. Properly used of the loose skin hanging from the necks of cattle.

51. **aunt.** Humorously applied to any old woman.

54. **tailor.** "He that slips beside his chair," says Johnson, "falls as a tailor squats upon his board." It has been suggested also that "tailor" was formerly used in the sense of "thief" or "cheat."

55. **quire.** Choir. The whole company laugh in chorus.

56. **waxen in their mirth.** Laugh louder and louder.

neeze. Sneeze.

57. **wasted.** Spent.

60. **Ill met.** How I hate to meet you.

63. **wanton.** Wilful and headstrong fairy.

64. Titania is sarcastic.

64-8. I know of times when you have stolen away from fairy land, and have taken the shape of a shepherd (Corin) and have played on pipes made of wheat stalks, and made verses to some lovesick shepherdess (Phyllida).

69. **steep.** Steep mountain side.

70. **forsooth.** Indeed,—expressing scorn.

bouncing. Vigorous, healthy.

Amazon. Hippolyta was queen of the Amazons,—a fabled race of female warriors.

71. **buskin'd.** The buskin was a high-heeled boot worn by those who engaged in the chase. Hippolyta was a huntress.

75. **Glance at my credit.** Hint at the regard in which Hippolyta holds me.

78-80. **Perigenia, Æglé, Ariadne, Antiopa.** These names are taken from Plutarch's *Life of Theseus.*

81. **the forgeries of jealousy.** Stories which you have invented because you are jealous.

82. **middle summer's spring.** The beginning (spring) of midsummer.

84. **paved.** With pebbly bottom.

85. **beached margent.** The beach which forms the margin of the sea.

86. To dance in circles, or rings, to the music of the whistling wind.

88. **in vain.** Because we do not dance to their music.

90. **Contagious.** Full of pestilence.

91. **pelting.** Paltry, insignificant.

92. **overborne their continents.** Overflowed their banks, which contain them.

93. **in vain.** Because there is no harvest.

94. **lost his sweat.** Toiled in vain.

corn. Grain.

95. **his.** Its.

a beard. Prickles.

97. **murrion flock.** The animals that have died of the murrain, or cattle plague.

98. **nine men's morris.** An open-air game resembling checkers. Each player had nine "men" or pieces. Holes were cut in the turf and the players moved their pieces from hole to hole, the object of the player being to get three pieces in a row. In winter or in wet weather when the holes were unused they would naturally become filled with mud. The "men" were called *merrils*, and it is supposed that *morris* is a corruption of this word.

99-100. On the village greens intricate paths (mazes) were marked out for the runners to follow in certain games. Now because of the weather these paths are not used and the grass has grown up in them.

quaint. Ingeniously laid out.

wanton. The grass has grown luxuriantly, with nothing to hold it in check.

101. **here.** In this country where our quarrels are taking place.

102. **carol.** Sung usually at Christmas time.

103. **governess of floods.** Controlling the tides.

104. **washes.** Fills with moisture.

106. **thorough this distemperature.** As a result of this quarrel of ours.

107. **hoary-headed.** White.

108. **the fresh lap.** The fresh petals.

109. **Hiems'.** Winter (Latin, *hiems*, winter).

112. **childing.** Fruitful, productive.

113. **Their wonted liveries.** Their usual dress.

113-4. The bewildered world can no longer judge what season it is by its natural products (increase).

116. **debate.** Dispute, quarrel.

117. **original.** Original cause.

121. **henchman.** Page.

122. I would not part with the child if you were to give me all fairy land.

123. **votaress.** One who has taken a vow as member of a society.

124. **spiced.** Filled with the odour of spices.

127. **the embarked traders.** The vessels sailing.

142. **chide.** Quarrel.

144. **injury.** Wrong, insult.

146. **Since.** When.

146-151. These lines probably refer to the pageantry which formed part of the entertainment of Queen Elizabeth when she visited the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth, in 1575. But according to some critics the "mermaid" is Mary Queen of Scots; the "dolphin," her husband the Dauphin of France; and the "stars," the English nobles who were ruined because of their devotion to her cause.

147. **dolphin.** A small sea animal belonging to the whale family.

148. **dulcet and harmonious breath.** Sweet, melodious notes.

149. **civil.** Calm.

152-161. In these lines there is no doubt a reference to the fact that Leicester made love to Queen Elizabeth, and that his suit was unsuccessful.

155. **a fair vestal.** Queen Elizabeth. In Roman times the vestal virgins were the priestesses who kept the fires burning in the temple of Vesta, the goddess of the hearth. These vestals were vowed to virginity, and hence Elizabeth is spoken of as a vestal because she too is a virgin queen.

159. **chaste.** Pure, unsullied.

160. **the imperial votaress.** The queen, vowed to virginity.

161. **fancy free.** Free from the passion of love.

162. **bolt.** Arrow.

165. **love-in-idleness.** A fanciful name for the pansy.

168. **or . . . or.** Either . . . or.

169. **it.** The man or woman.

171. **leviathan.** Here, whale.

172. I'll go around the earth.

179. **the soul of love.** The most passionate love.

182. **page.** Boy.

187. **slayeth me.** By refusing to return my love.

189. **and wood.** And mad, or frantic.

192. **adamant.** Here, the lodestone or magnet. The word *diamond* is a corruption of *adamant.*

194. **leave.** Give up.

196. **speak you fair.** Speak gently to you.

200. **your spaniel.** As devoted to you as a spaniel to its master.

205. **worser.** The double comparative is common in Shakespeare.

211. **impeach.** Lay blame upon.

214. **for that.** Because.

218. **in my respect.** In my view.

225. Apollo, the god of the sun, was in love with the nymph Daphne. He pursued her, but she was changed into a laurel bush that she might escape him.

226. **griffin.** A fabulous creature with the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.

229. **stay thy questions.** Stay to listen to your talk.

234. The wrong you do me forces me to run after you, and this is unbecoming to my sex.

238. **To die.** By dying.

upon the hand. By the hand.

244. **ox-lips.** Cowslips.

nodding. Hanging its head.

245. **luscious woodbine.** Fragrant honeysuckle. *Luscious* is commonly used in the sense of "delicious."

246. **eglantine.** Sweet-briar.

247. **sometime of the night.** Sometimes during the night.

248. **dances and delight.** Dances that give delight.

249. **throws.** Casts off.

enamell'd. Smooth.

252. **fantasies.** Fancies.

260. **fond.** Doting foolishly.

Scene II.

In this scene Oberon lays a charm upon Titania by squeezing the juice of the magic flower upon her eyelids; and in the same way Puck lays a charm upon Lysander. The audience then has the double interest of seeing what the effect of the charm will be in each case. To add to the picturesqueness of the situation, the scene in fairy land, with dance and song, is contrasted immediately after, with the frantic pleadings of the distracted lovers.

1. **roundel.** Dance in a circle.

2. The fairies, being so small themselves, divide up their time into small parts.

hence. Go hence.

3. **cankers.** Canker-worms.

4. **rere-mice.** Bats. They are called *rere-mice* from the flapping of their wings (A. S. *hreran*, to stir, to agitate).

7. **quaint.** Dainty, delicate.

8. **offices.** Duties.

9. **double.** Forked.

10. **Thorny.** Covered with sharp prickles or spines.

11. **Newts.** Lizards.

blind-worms. Slow-worms. Both newts and blind-worms were formerly supposed to be poisonous, but are now known to be harmless.

13. **Philomel.** The nightingale, to which the name Philomela was given in classical myth.

21. **spinners.** Spiders.

30. **ounce.** Lynx, or panther.

cat. Wild-cat.

31. **Pard.** Leopard.

42. That is, with half the sleep that he has wished her.

45. **approve.** Put to the test.

48. **Weeds.** Garments.

53. **owe.** Possess.

58. **his.** Its.

63. **darkling.** In the dark.

65. **fond.** Foolish.

66. The more I beg the less favour do I find.

73-4. It is no wonder if (though) Demetrius flees from me in this way.

76. **eyne.** Eyes.

80. **run through fire.** Face any danger.

96-7. Now that I have reached the highest point in my mental development, my will is guided by my reason.

105. **flout my insufficiency.** Mock at my shortcomings.

106. **Good troth.** In good truth.

111. **abus'd.** Deceived.

116-7. False doctrines are hated most by those who formerly believed in them but who have now given them up.

120. **address.** Direct.

130. **an if.** *An* has the same meaning as *if*, and is here used along with *if* to make it stronger.

131. **of all loves.** By all loves; a mild form of oath.

Questions.

1. (*a*) What suggestions do you find in Scene I. as to the size of the fairies?

(*b*) What popular superstitions regarding the fairies are referred to in this scene?

2. (*a*) "Shakespeare emphasizes the fickleness of love in human beings by showing that the fairies, who have such power over men and women, are also inconstant in love." Explain by reference to Scene I.

(*b*) "The self-importance of the fairies adds an element of humour to the situation." How is their self-importance shown in this scene?

3. What evidence does Scene I. afford as to, (*a*) the year in which the play was written, (*b*) the supposition that it was performed before Queen Elizabeth?

4. What references to flowers do you find in the speeches of the fairies in Act II.?

5. (*a*) What reason does Lysander give to Helena to account for his sudden love for her?

(*b*) What explanation does Helena give to account for his protestations of love?

Act III.—Scene I.

In the first part of this scene the humour lies in the attempts of the clowns, and of Bottom in particular, to overcome the imaginary difficulties connected with the acting of their play; and in the crude devices of the clowns Shakespeare is, no doubt, holding up to ridicule the stage methods that were common in his own day. In the second half of the scene the humour reaches its climax at the point where Titania becomes infatuated with Bottom. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast than the delicate beauty of Titania and the grotesque figure of the dull, conceited Bottom; and the audience knows not whether to laugh more at the helpless infatuation of Titania fondling the dull clown, or at the complacency with which Bottom receives the attentions of Titania and her attendant fairies.

2. **Pat, pat.** Exactly.

4. **tiring-house.** Dressing room; attiring house.

7. **bully.** A slang term, applied to a rough, good-natured fellow.

12. **By'r lakin.** By our ladykin (little lady), the Virgin Mary.

parlous. Perilous, alarming.

13-4. **when all is done.** After all.

18. **more better.** A double comparative, used for emphasis.

22. **eight and six.** Eight syllables in one line and six in the next; the measure in which ballads, such as "John Gilpin," for example, were commonly written.

26. **I promise you.** I assure you.

30. **your.** A colloquial use of the adjective.

36. **defect.** Effect.

40. **pity of my life.** A sad thing for me.

52. **casement.** A window opening on hinges.

55-6. **a bush of thorns.** According to one tradition the man in the moon, with a bundle of thorns on his back, represents the man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the sabbath day. (*Numbers*, xv, 32-36.)

56. **lanthorn.** Lantern. *Lanthorn* is a mistaken spelling, due to the fact that lanterns used to have horn sides.

56-7. **to disfigure, or to present.** To figure or to represent.

64. **roughcast.** Plaster mixed with gravel.

72. **cue.** The last words of a speech, which are the signal for the next actor to begin his speech.

73. **hempen home-spuns.** Coarse fellows, wearing home-spun garments made of hemp.

75. **toward.** In preparation.

84. Puck means to say that when Bottom reappears he will be "a stranger Pyramus than e'er played here." In what form does he reappear?

89-93. Point out the absurdities in these lines.

91. **briskly juvenal.** Brisk and young (juvenile).

94. Ninus was the first king of Babylon.

99. Pyramus is supposed to say, "If I were, fair Thisby, I were only thine": that is, "If I were true, I would be only thine." His blunder is made all the more humorous because he comes in with the ass's head.

102. **about.** Astray. **a round.** In a roundabout way.

105. **a fire.** A will-o'-the wisp.

108. **a knavery.** A trick.

112-3. **you see an ass-head of your own.** This was a common saying in Shakespeare's time. Bottom, of course, does not realize that he is wearing an ass's head, and does not know that his words have a double meaning.

115. **translated.** Transformed.

121. **ousel.** Blackbird.

123. **throstle.** Thrush.

124. **little quill.** Weak note. *Quill* is used here in the sense of *pipe*, or song.

128. **plain-song.** With simple notes.

129. A man who hears the note of the cuckoo may fancy that it is calling him a cuckold,—a man whose wife is unfaithful to him.

131. **set his wit to.** Try to answer.

137. **thy fair virtue's force.** The power (force) of your beauty (fair virtue).

140-1. Nowadays people fall in love without any reason.

143. I can make a jest when there is any occasion for it.

149. **rate.** Rank.

150. The riches of the summer are always at my command.

still. Always.

153 **jewels.** Pearls.

155-6. I will take away all the coarseness of your human (mortal) form, so that you shall be like a fairy.

164. **in his eyes.** Before his eyes.

165. **apricocks.** An older spelling of *apricots*.

dewberries. Brambleberries.

167. **humble-bees.** Wild bees, so-called from their humming sound; bumble-bees.

169. **glow-worm's eyes.** It is in reality the tail, not the head, of the glow-worm that shines.

170. **To have.** To bring.

178. **I cry your worship's mercy.** I beg pardon of your worship.

182. **if I cut my finger.** Cobwebs are sometimes used to stop bleeding.

185. **Squash.** An unripe pea-pod.

186. **Peascod.** Pea-pod.

192. **patience.** Perhaps Bottom is referring ironically to the fact that mustard is hot.

192-3. This may be a reference to the fact that mustard is sometimes served with roast-beef.

194. The mustard was so hot that it made his eyes water.

200. **enforced.** Violated.

SCENE II.

In this long scene there is very little real poetry, and the reader is likely to weary of the endless "jangling" of the lovers' quarrels. But to the audience who see the play acted there are few dull moments in the course of the scene. The scene as a whole serves as a good example of Shakespeare's early and immature style.

3. **in extremity.** To the utmost.

5. **night-rule.** Probably a corruption of "night revel."

6. **monster.** An unnatural creature; here, Bottom wearing the ass's head.

7. **close.** Private, secret.

9. **patches.** Clowns.

mechanicals. Mechanic.

10. **stalls.** Small shops where the mechanics plied their occupations.

13. **thickskin.** Dull fellow.

barren sort. Stupid class of people.

14. **presented.** Represented.

17. **nole.** Head, noddle.

19. **mimic.** Actor.

21. **russet-pated choughs.** Jackdaws with gray heads. *Russet* usually means "reddish-brown"; but it is sometimes, as here, used in the sense of "gray."

many in sort. Many of the same kind: in a great crowd.

25. **at our stamp.** The fairies were supposed to have the power of shaking the ground.

26. **He.** Another one.

27-8. Because they were so frightened they lost what little sense they had, and as a result in their panic they were injured by senseless things such as briers and thorns.

30. All things catch the clothing of people who are running away; some things catch their sleeves; some things catch their hats.

32. **translated.** Transformed.

36. **latch'd.** Either *anointed* or *moistened.*

40. **of force.** Of necessity.

41. **Stand close.** Stand still, so as not to be noticed.

44. **breath.** Words.

48. Since you have taken the first step in bloodshed, plunge into the depths of it.

54-5. If the moon should creep through the centre of the earth she would displease her brother the sun who is shining at noontide on the opposite side of the earth from us.

57. **dead.** Deadly.

60. **Venus.** The planet shining in the sky.

62. **What's this to.** What has this to do with?

7. **O brave touch!** O what a brave deed! Ironical.

71. **a worm.** A serpent.

72. **doubler.** More forked.

74. **a mispris'd mood.** A mistaken fancy.

82. There is no use in my following her while she is in this fierce mood.

84-7. My sorrow is heavier because I have been unable to sleep; but if I stay here for a while I may be able to sleep a little.

Since he has had no sleep, sleep is said to be bankrupt, *i.e.*, unable to pay its debts. But sleep will pay this debt now in some degree if he waits here until the offer (tender) of payment is made.

86. *Which* refers to "debt"; *it* refers to "sleep."

87. **his.** Its.

90-1. The result of your mistake (misprision) must of necessity (perforce) be that some true love is turned false rather than that a false love has turned true.

92-93. Then fate has ordained that for every one who is true to his vows of love there are a million who are false to them and who break oath after oath.

96. **fancy-sick.** Love-sick.

pale of cheer. Pale of countenance.

97. A reference to the old belief that every sigh meant the loss of a drop of blood.

99. **against she do appear.** So as to be ready when she appears.

101. **a Tartar's bow.** Some of the Tartar tribes were famous for their skill in archery.

102-3. See Act II., Scene I., ll. 152-165.

113. **a lover's fee.** This is proverbially said to be three kisses.

114. **fond pageant.** Foolish show, or spectacle.

121. **befall preposterously.** Happen perversely.

124-5. When vows are born in tears, they are seen to be true at their very birth (nativity).

127. **the badge of faith.** The mark of sincerity,—that is, in this case, the tears that accompany them.

128. **advance.** Show.

129. **When truth kills truth.** In order to be true to me you must break your vows to Hermia.

131. **you will nothing weigh.** Because one oath will exactly balance the other.

133. **tales.** That is, idle tales.

139. **Crystal is muddy.** Compared with the brightness of your eyes crystal is as dull as mud.

141-4. The white snow of Taurus, in the coldest wind, is black compared with your hand.

144. **princess.** Perfection.

seal of bliss. Pledge of happiness.

150. **join in souls.** Conspire together.

153. **superpraise my parts.** Overpraise my qualities.

157. **A trim exploit.** A fine performance. Spoken ironically.

159. **of noble sort.** Of noble nature.

160. **extort.** Exhaust.

171. **guest-wise sojourned.** Stayed only a short time as a guest.

175. **aby.** Pay for.

177. **his.** Its.

187. **engilds.** Brightens.

188. **oes and eyes of light.** The stars.

194. **false.** Wicked.

in spite of me. In order to spite me.

195. **Injurious.** Insulting.

197. To torment me with this mockery.

203. **artificial.** Possessing the *art* or skill to create new things.

205. **sampler.** A piece of linen on which patterns were worked in wool, as *samples* of the skill of the worker.

208. **incorporate.** In one body.

210. **a union in partition.** United, though divided.

213-4. In the case of man and wife the two coats-of-arms appear side by side as if belonging to one person and are surmounted by a single crest,—the husband's.

Two of the first. Two of the former, *i.e.*, two bodies, mentioned in the preceding line.

heraldry. The art of designing and blazoning coats-of-arms.

214. **Due but to one.** Belonging only to one.

215. **rent.** Rend, tear.

220. **amazed.** Bewildered, confused.

230. **tender.** Offer.

forsooth. Indeed: used to express scorn.

232. **in grace.** In his favour.

233. **hung upon.** Clung to.

234. **to love unlov'd.** Because I love without being loved in return.

237. **persever.** The older spelling, accented on the second syllable.

238. **Make mouths upon me.** Express your scorn of me.

239. **hold the sweet jest up.** Continue this fine jest.

240. **well carried.** Well carried out.
chronicled. Recorded as something worth remembering.

242. **argument.** Subject of scorn.

248. If she (Hermia) cannot persuade you to treat Helena less scornfully, I can compel you to do so.

256. **whereto tends all this?** What is the object of all this?

257. **Away.** Hermia is clinging to Lysander.

you Ethiop. Used in contempt with reference to Hermia's dark complexion. So also *tawny Tartar* (l. 263).

258. **Seem to.** Pretend to.

take on as. Act as if.

267-8. **bond.** A play on the two meanings of the word, a *written promise or pledge*, and a *tie which binds*.

272. **what news.** What new thing is this?

273. **erewhile.** Formerly.

274. **Since night.** Since nightfall.

282. **juggler.** She is speaking to Helena.

canker-blossom. Worm that eats the heart out of the blossom.

286. **No touch.** No particle.

288. **puppet.** Doll.

289. **that way goes the game.** That is how she is making sport of me.

290. **compare.** Comparison.

291. **urg'd.** Made boast of.

292. **personage.** Form, personal appearance.

296. **painted maypole.** The pole around which the villagers danced at the May-day sports. The maypole was painted with vertical or diagonal stripes of various colours.

300. **curst.** Shrewish, sharp-tongued.

302. **a right maid.** A girl, indeed.

304. **something.** Somewhat.

310. **your stealth.** Your having stolen away.

314. **so.** If.

317. **fond.** Foolish.

323. **shrewd.** Shrewish, sharp-tempered.

329. **minimus.** Small creature.

hindering knot-grass. Knot-grass is so called because of the knotted or thickened joints. It was supposed to hinder the growth of children.

330. **bead.** Because she is small and dark complexioned.

officious. Here, zealous.

333. **intend.** Pretend.

335. **aby.** Pay for.

336-7. **to try, etc.** To try which of us has the most rightful claim.

338. **cheek by jole.** Cheek beside cheek (jole or jowl).

339. All this disturbance (coil) is because of you.

341. **curst.** Shrewish, ill-tempered.

344. **amaz'd.** Confused, bewildered.

345. **still thou mistak'st.** You are always making mistakes.

347. **shadows.** Spirits.

352. **sort.** Turn out, happen.

355. **overcast.** Cover over with clouds.

356. **welkin.** Sky.

357. **Acheron.** In classical myth, one of the four rivers of Hades.

361. **wrong.** Insults.

365. **batty wings.** Wings like a bat's.

367. **liquor.** Juice.

virtuous property. Good quality.

368. **his might.** Its power.

373. Bound together by love which shall endure until death.

date. Duration.

379. **dragons.** In classical mythology the chariot of night is represented as being drawn by horses, not by dragons.

380. **Aurora's harbinger.** The morning-star, the forerunner (harbinger) of the dawn (Aurora).

383. It was customary to bury the bodies of criminals at cross roads; and the spirits of persons drowned at sea were supposed to wander for a hundred years.

387. Must have dark night forever as their companion.

389. Cephalus, a Greek youth, was beloved of Aurora, the dawn. Hence he is spoken of as "The Morning's love."

made sport. Engaged in the chase.

402. **drawn.** With sword drawn.

404. **plainer.** Smoother.

410-1. It would be a shame to draw a sword on such a coward.

422. **Abide.** Await.

wot. Know.

426. **buy this dear.** Pay dearly for this.

432. *Comforts* is subject of *shine*, and *shine* is in the subjunctive expressing a wish.

459-62. These are proverbial sayings.

Questions.

1. (*a*) In Scene I., what difficulties do the clowns anticipate in connection with the acting of their play?

(*b*) How does Bottom propose to overcome these difficulties?

2. (*a*) Why did it seem especially appropriate that Bottom should wear an ass's head?

(*b*) Point out some of the expressions of Bottom himself and of Titania, with reference to his appearance, that add to the humour of the situation.

3. "Scene II. presents a series of humorous situations, arising out of the frantic passions of the lovers." Analyse the scene so as to show what different situations it presents.

4. (*a*) What suggestions as to the personal appearance of Hermia and Helena respectively do you find in this scene?

(*b*) Compare Hermia and Helena with respect to disposition.

5. In Act II., Scene I., Puck was spoken of as a "shrewd and knavish sprite." Show by reference to his speeches in this scene that this description is appropriate.

Act IV.—Scene I.

This scene is one of the most picturesque in the play. In the beginning of the scene, Bottom, still wearing the ass's head, is seated upon a bed of flowers, attended by Titania and her fairies, while Oberon looks on unseen. The "rough music" adds to the incongruity of the scene, and the height of the ridiculous is reached when Bottom falls asleep in the arms of Titania. Then the dénouement begins. First Titania and later Bottom and the lovers are released from the spell. In the meantime with the coming of dawn, Theseus and Hippolyta and their train appear in the enchanted wood, and in the noble music of their speech the frantic jarring of the lovers in the previous scene is forgotten. The lovers are wakened by the horns and shouts of the huntsmen, and all together wend their way to the temple in Athens. Only Bottom is left, and he too, as he sets out, is lost in wonder at the "most rare vision" he has had.

2. **amiable.** Lovely.

coy. Caress.

7. **Mounsieur.** Monsieur, as Bottom pronounces it.

15. **overflown.** Overflowed by the honey.

19. **neaf.** Fist.

20. **leave your courtesy.** Stop curtseying, or bowing.

22. **Cavalery.** Cavalero, or chevalier, a title of courtesy.

Cobweb. This should be Pease-blossom. Cobweb has been sent for the honey-bag.

29. The weavers in Shakespeare's time were given to psalm-singing.

30. **tongs.** The sounds were produced by striking them with a key.

33. **bottle.** Bundle.

34. **fellow.** Equal.

39. **exposition.** Disposition. Another of Bottom's blunders.

41. **be all ways away.** Be off, in all directions.

42. **woodbine.** Here, probably the bindweed, which twists itself around the honeysuckle.

43. **female ivy.** Spoken of as "female" because it clings to the elm.

42-4. Woodbine is, literally, any climbing plant which "binds" or clings to, "wood;" and the honeysuckle is sometimes spoken of as woodbine. It is possible that in this passage *honeysuckle* is in apposition with *woodbine*, and that *ivy* is the object of *entwist*. In that case the passage will be punctuated as follows:

> "So doth the woodbine, the sweet honeysuckle,
> Gently entwist the female ivy, so
> Enrings the barky fingers of the elm."

That is to say, the woodbine entwists the female ivy, and also enrings the barky fingers of the elm.

47. **dotage.** Her foolish affection for Bottom.

49. **favours.** Love-tokens; here, probably flowers.

53. **sometime.** Formerly.

54. **orient.** Literally from the east; hence, bright and full of lustre.

66. **other.** Others.

67. **May all.** All the lovers may.

69. **fierce.** Wild, confused.

73. **Dian's bud.** Possibly the bud of the chaste-tree, so called because it was supposed to have the power to make a man or a woman chaste. Diana was the virgin goddess; hence "Dian's bud."

Cupid's flower. The pansy, or "love-in-idleness."

82. **five.** The four lovers and Bottom.

86. **rock the ground.** See Act III., Scene II., l. 25.

87. **are new in amity.** Are friends once more.

88. **solemnly.** With ceremony.

95. **sad.** Grave.

97. **compass.** Encircle.

104. **observation.** Observance; rites to celebrate May-day. See Act I., Scene I., l. 167.

105. **vaward.** Beginning, forepart.

107. **Uncouple.** Uncouple the hound from the leash.

108. **Dispatch.** Hurry.

110-1. Notice the musical mingling of sounds when the baying of the hounds and the echoes are heard together.

112. **Cadmus.** A Phoenician king, who founded the Greek city of Thebes.

113. **Crete.** The island of Candia in the Mediterranean.

115. **chiding.** Baying.

120. **So flew'd.** With the same kind of flews. The flews are the overhanging lips, or chaps.

so sanded. Of the same sandy colour.

122. **dew-lapp'd.** See Act II., Scene I., l. 50, and note.

Thessalian. Thessaly, a province in the northern part of Greece was famous for its bulls.

123-4. **matched in mouth-like bells, each under each.** The voices of the hounds were like a chime of bells, forming a descending scale of notes.

124. **tuneable.** Tuneful.

125. **holla'd.** "Holla" or "Hallo" was the huntsman's call to his hounds to stop.

134. **in grace of our solemnity.** To do honour to us in these May-day rites.

140. **St. Valentine.** St. Valentine's day, when the birds were said to choose their mates.

144-6. How does it come that there is so much gentleness and peace in the world that you who hate each other have so little suspicion that you sleep by each other without fear.

jealousy. Suspicion.

147. **amazedly.** Confusedly; in bewilderment.

161. **stealth.** Stealing away.

164. **in fancy.** In love.

168. **gaud.** See note on Act I., Scene I., l. 33.

174. **like in sickness.** Just as when one is sick.

175. **come.** Having returned.

180. **overbear.** Overrule.

182. **knit.** United.

183. **for.** Because.

worn. Used up.

186. **solemnity.** Ceremony.

188. **These things.** The experiences of the night.

190. **parted.** Divided.

193. "Mine own" because I have found it; "Not mine own" because it has been lost by some one else who may claim it.

207. **go about to.** Make an effort to.

210. **a patched fool.** Wearing a motley or parti-coloured coat.

218. **her death.** Thisbe's death.

SCENE II.

As far as the clowns are concerned, this scene forms the conclusion to their night's adventures. Bottom rejoins his fellow actors, and the audience learns that the play of Pyramus and Thisbe has been "preferred" or recommended, and that there is a chance at least that it may be performed before the duke.

4. **transported.** Transformed, or changed, as they had seen him in the wood.

5-6. **it goes not forward.** It will not be put on.

8. **discharge.** Play the part of.

9. **wit.** Intelligence.

13. **paragon.** A model or perfect pattern.

paramour. A lover. The word is generally used in a bad sense; hence Flute's remark.

14. **a thing of naught.** A good-for-nothing or wicked thing.

17. **we had all been made men.** Fortunes would have been made.

20. **an.** If.

28. **right as it fell out.** Exactly as it happened.

32. **strings.** To tie them on.

pumps. Low shoes without heels.

33. **presently.** Immediately.

34. **preferred.** Recommended; submitted for approval.

38. Sweet breath. A play on the word "breath," which was sometimes used, as here, for "words."

Questions.

1. Wherein does the humour lie in the first part of Scene I.?

2. Point out the expressions in this scene that help to justify the title, "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

3. The audience is reminded that this is "the day that Hermia should give answer of her choice." How many days have elapsed since Theseus pronounced judgment upon Hermia? Show by reference to the play how this time has been occupied by the lovers.

Act V.—Scene I.

At the close of Act IV., the four main stories in the play—the stories of the lovers, the fairies, the clowns, and of Theseus and Hippolyta,—are in reality complete; and there remains for Act V. only the presentation of the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by Bottom and his companions. This play fitly ends with a bergomask, or rude clownish dance. Then as a fitting conclusion for this "Midsummer-Night's Dream" we have the beautiful fairy scene in which Oberon, Titania and their train come to bless the house of Theseus and the lovers.

2. **may believe.** Am able to believe.

3. **antique.** Odd.

fairy toys. Fanciful stories of such trifling things.

4. **seething brains.** Minds that are always excited.

5. **shaping fantasies.** Imaginations that create (shape) new things.

5-6. **apprehend, comprehend.** As here used, *apprehend*, means to have a general vague notion; *comprehend*, on the other hand, means to understand fully.

8. **all compact.** Wholly made up of.

10. **all as frantic.** Quite as mad.

11. Even if the object of his love is as dark-complexioned as a gypsy, the lover thinks her as beautiful as Helen.

Helen's beauty. Helen, wife of Menelaus, king of Greece, is commonly spoken of as the type of perfect beauty. Tennyson speaks of her as, "daughter of gods, divinely tall, and most divinely fair."

brow of Egypt. The face of a gypsy. The gypsies were so-called because of the belief that they were descended from the ancient Egyptians. In reality they came originally from India.

14. **bodies forth.** Creates; gives form to.

14-5. The imagination, of course, cannot create anything wholly new. It can only take what already exists in our experience and recombine the elements into new form.

16. **Turns them to shapes.** Pictures them as definite persons or things.

airy nothing. Something which does not really exist outside the mind of the poet.

17. **A local habitation.** A place in which it dwells. Shakespeare, for example, creates out of his imagination a character whom he calls "Bottom," and whom he represents as living in Athens.

19-20. If we anticipate some pleasure, however vaguely, we are ready to form a mental picture of the person or thing who will bring us this pleasure.

21-2. As with joy, so it is with fear also. When our minds are filled with a vague fear, we are ready to imagine that we see some object of fear.

23-5. Hippolyta thinks that because the lovers agree as to the details of the whole night's experiences, and because the minds of all the lovers have been affected in the same way, it is a proof that there is something more in their stories than the mere disordered imagination of the lovers.

24. **transfigured.** Changed.

25. **More witnesseth.** In proof of something more.

fancy's images. Images due to love (fancy).

26. All this makes up a story that is very consistent (of great constancy).

27. **admirable.** To be wondered at.

30. **More than to us.** May more joy than you have wished to us.

31. **Wait on.** Attend, accompany.

32. **masques.** Literally, an entertainment at which masques were worn by those who took part. On the stage a masque is a play in which the chief interest lies in the music and dancing, costumes and scenery, rather than in the plot.

33. **manager of mirth.** Master of the Revels.

36. **abridgment.** Pastime; something to "abridge" or shorten the time.

39. **brief.** List.

ripe. Ready, prepared.

41. **the Centaurs.** According to myth the Centaurs were a race of creatures, half man, half horse, who inhabited Thessaly. Hercules is said to have fought with them and defeated them.

42. **eunuch.** A male servant usually employed as a chamberlain.

45-6. The Greek musician, Orpheus, was, according to the myth, torn to pieces by Thracian women engaged in a drunken orgy, because he continued to mourn for his lost wife Eurydice, and spurned their advances.

Bacchanals. Followers of Bacchus, god of wine.

47. **an old device.** A play that is not newly devised or put together; and hence one that has been performed before.

49-50. It is possible that these lines refer to the dramatist, Robert Greene, who died in poverty in 1592. Greene was a Master of Arts of both Oxford and Cambridge.

51. **critical.** Expressing censure.

52. **sorting with.** In keeping with.

57. How can we make these contradictory terms (tragical mirth) agree?

62. **fitted.** Suited to the part he has to play.

65. "Which" does double duty as object of *saw* and subject of *made*.

67. passion. Emotion.

70. Which. In Shakespeare's time the conjunctive pronoun *which* was used with reference to either persons or things.

71. toil'd. Exercised.

unbreath'd memories. Memories which have not had any exercise.

72. against. In preparation for.

74. It is not for you. It is not suitable for you.

77. They have strained (stretched) every effort and have learned (conned) their parts with great difficulty.

80. tender it. Offer it.

82-3. I do not like to see too great burdens laid upon these people who are struggling to prepare this play, and I do not wish to see them fail (perish) in their efforts to serve you.

his. Its.

87. take what they mistake. Accept their service in spite of their mistakes.

88-9. Though their performance be lacking in merit (poor), yet we respect their efforts (might).

90. where I have come. In places which I have visited.

clerks. Scholars.

91. premeditated. Carefully prepared.

92. Where. In which.

94. Throttle their practis'd accent. Although they have practised their speech yet they choke in the midst of it.

98. fearful. Timid, full of fear.

102. In least speak most. Although they say the least, yet they express the most.

to my capacity. In my opinion, to my mind.

103. is address'd. Is ready to begin.

104. Flourish of trumpets. To announce that the play was about to begin.

105-14. Quince puts the stops in the wrong places, so that he says just the opposite of what he really means. When properly punctuated the speech should read as follows:

> "If we offend, it is with our good will
> That you should think we come not to offend,
> But with good will to show our simple skill;
> That is the true beginning of our end.
> Consider then. We come; but in despite
> We do not come. As minding to content you,
> Our true intent is all for your delight.
> We are not here that you should here repent you.
> The actors are at hand; and by their show
> You shall know all that you are like to know."

115. **stand upon points.** Pay any attention to pauses.

120. **a recorder.** A kind of flute or flageolet.

not in government. Not properly controlled, hence without any tune.

135. **hight.** Is called.

142-3. Shakespeare is, no doubt, ridiculing the excessive use of alliteration which was common in his time.

143. **broach'd.** Stabbed.

159. **sinister.** Left-hand.

165. **grim-look'd.** Grim looking.

172. **eyne.** Eyes.

177. **sensible.** Capable of feeling.

181. **pat.** Exactly.

188. **an.** If.

192. **Limander.** Leander (not Limander) was a youth of Abydos, who, according to legend, used to swim across the Hellespont every night to visit Hero of Sestos, with whom he was in love.

193. **Helen.** He means Hero. One night Leander was drowned, and on learning of his death Hero threw herself into the sea.

194. Cephalus ("Shafalus"), a Greek youth, was beloved by Eos, the Dawn; he did not return her love, however, but remained true to his wife Procris ("Procrus").

199. **'Tide life, 'tide death.** Whether life or death comes to me (betides).

202. **the mural.** The wall.

207-8. The best actors are mere reflections of real life, and the worst are as good as the best if your imagination help to make up for their shortcomings.

219. **A lion-fell.** A lion's skin.

dam. Mother.

225. **a very fox for his valour.** That is, he has no valour.

227. **his valour cannot carry his discretion.** He has not enough valour to make him discreet.

232. **present.** Represent.

234. **He is no crescent.** He is not a new moon.

241. **come there.** Inside the lantern.

for the candle. On account of the candle which was burning in the lantern.

242. **in snuff.** A pun. A candle was "in snuff" when the wick was charred and needed trimming; a person was "in snuff" when he was offended.

261. **moused.** Shaken, as a cat shakes a mouse.

270. **dole.** Grief.

276. **fell.** Cruel.

277-8. The three Fates, in classical mythology, wove the web of a man's life and cut the threads when his life was ended.

thrum. The tufted ends of the threads where they are fastened to the loom.

279. **Quail, quell.** Two forms of the same word, meaning *to kill.*

280. **passion.** Strong grief.

282. **Beshrew.** Plague upon.

286. **cheer.** Face, or pleasant expression of countenance.

287. **confound.** Mingle together.

289. **pap.** Breast.

299. **die.** A cube used in gaming.

ace. The side of the cube marked with one spot only. "Ace" is probably pronounced "ass," as here used.

310. **A mote.** An atom, a speck of dust.

which. Here equivalent to *whether*.

311. **God warrant us.** God preserve us.

314. **videlicet.** Viz., namely.

326. Green eyes were considered a mark of beauty.

327. **Sisters three.** The three Fates.

331. **shore.** Shorn.

335. **imbrue.** Soak, or steep, in blood.

343. **a Bergomask dance.** A rude, clownish dance.

350. **notably discharged.** Excellently performed.

352. **told.** Counted.

355. **overwatch'd.** Remained awake too long.

356. **palpable-gross.** So crude and coarse that no one can fail to see its crudeness.

363. **all.** Quite.

fordone. Done out, tired.

370. **his sprite.** Its spirit.

373. **the triple Hecate.** The moon-goddess who ruled the upper air, the earth, and the lower regions. As goddess of the upper air she was known as Cynthia; as goddess of the earth she was known as Diana, and as goddess of the underworld she was known as Hecate.

379. To help the housemaids by sweeping the dust into the corner behind the door, where no one would see it.

401. **prodigious.** Such as would be a blemish; portentous.

402. **nativity.** Birth.

404. **consecrate.** Consecrated.

405. **take his gait.** Take his way.

406. **several.** Separate.

412. **we shadows.** We spirits.

417. Producing in your minds nothing more than a dream.

418. **reprehend.** Find fault with.

421-2. If we have the good fortune, which we do not deserve, to escape being hissed.

426. **Give me your hands.** Clap your hands.

Questions.

1. (*a*) How does Theseus account for the strange story which the lovers have told them?

(*b*) What does Hippolyta think of the story?

2. It might seem unnatural that a play so ridiculous as the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe* should be acted before Theseus upon an occasion such as this. How does Shakespeare overcome this difficulty?

3. What does Hippolyta think of the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* as acted by the clowns?

4. Why not have the play end with the speech of Theseus, l. 359?

STAGING A PLAY OF SHAKESPEARE

The plays of Shakespeare were written to be acted, and they are much more effective when put upon the stage than when merely read in class. In some schools, where there is a large staff and a large number of students and a good auditorium, it is possible to stage a complete play; and even in the smaller schools individual scenes may be put on with very little outlay for costume or scenery.

The simplest form of dramatic production consists merely in reading or reciting single scenes from a play of Shakespeare before the class, without special costumes or scenery, during the lesson period; and an occasional period spent in this way is a pleasing variation from the routine of class work. But needless to say, before any attempt is made to act scenes from the play in this way, they must be studied in class. The teacher, in this case, assigns the parts beforehand; the pupils learn the speeches and study how they should be spoken, and one or two practices are held after school hours to make the acting run smoothly. Sometimes two casts are chosen for the same scene, and it is a matter of rivalry to see which group of actors can produce the scene more effectively.

In schools where the teacher and pupils decide to stage a play in whole or in part for public performance, some sort of dramatic organization is required. If there is a dramatic club in the school it will naturally take full charge of the production; but, if not, the teacher and class must take the first steps to arrange for the play.

The first thing to be done is to select the play, and if possible it should be one that has been studied in class. The dramatic production should be the outgrowth of class work, and the would-be actor must make a study of the characters, the development of the plot, the structure of the play and the purpose of each scene. He must have studied the play so thoroughly that he knows the exact meaning of every expression, and is able to interpret the feelings of the various speakers in the play.

In any dramatic organization, the most important person is the director or stage-manager of the play, who is usually also the "coach," who gives instruction to the actors. The director has full charge of the production of the play, the rehearsals, the scenery and stage effects, the costumes, etc., etc. He must, of course, be assisted by various committees, but he directs their work and his decisions are in all cases final. He should not only have some knowledge of how to stage a play, but should have certain indispensable personal qualities such as tact, good humour, executive ability and decision. It is desirable, for obvious reasons, that some member of the staff should be the director of the school play: but experience and knowledge of stage production is the first consideration. The director, of course, does not himself take part in the play.

Next to the director, or stage-manager, the most important member of the organization is the "prompter," who is usually assistant stage-manager. He must be thoroughly familiar with the play, and in addition to his general services, it is his duty to prompt the actors at rehearsals and on the night of the performance.

The manager is assisted by a committee of students, each with specific duties. Different students, or committees of students, are given charge of:—

(*a*) The scenery, including the carpenter work and the curtain.
(*b*) The lighting, and electrical devices.
(*c*) The stage properties,—i.e. the furnishings and small articles—everything, in fact, except the costumes and scenery.
(*d*) The costumes.
(*e*) The music, including the orchestra.
(*f*) The make-up.
(*g*) The business details, advertising, printing, sale of tickets, ushers, etc.

It is necessary to guard against over-organization and over-lapping; and the director must use his discretion as to how many assistants are required.

In general, a play of Shakespeare is much too long for presentation on a modern stage, and even in single scenes certain parts may be cut out to advantage. The play must be studied carefully by the director, either with or without the class, in order to decide what scenes may be omitted and how the speeches may be shortened. As a result of this revision, an acting edition of the play is produced. It is better if possible, to give to each actor

a typewritten copy of his own part in the play, rather than have him rely on the text as a whole.

One of the first duties of the director is to choose a cast for the play, and in making the selection he may be assisted by a committee of two or three judges. At the "try-out," those who wish to take part in the play are required to read a scene, or part of a scene, which they have prepared. In assigning parts to different students, the judges must take into account (*a*) the voice,—its carrying power, tone, flexibility, etc. (*b*) ability of the actor to enter into the spirit of the play, to *feel* the part he acts, and (*c*) his physical suitability for the part. No student should accept a part in the play unless he can give an assurance that he will attend the rehearsals faithfully and punctually. There should be a definite understanding on this point before the cast is completed.

Usually at least twelve or fifteen rehearsals are required, that is about three a week for five or six weeks. The first two or three rehearsals are given over to blocking out the action. The actors read their parts, and the director gives instructions as to entrances, exits, movements, acting, and stage "business." At these rehearsals no attention is paid to the speaker's voice or expression, but the actors must become familiar with their positions and movements on the stage, and the same routine must be followed at subsequent rehearsals. After this preliminary work has been done, the play must be studied scene by scene and line by line for the purpose of securing the proper interpretation and expression. The first Act is rehearsed repeatedly before proceeding with the second. When the acting and the reading go hand in hand, the actors learn their lines with

little effort, and at the end of the first week, Act I should be letter-perfect. It is not always necessary to have the full cast present at the rehearsals, for single speeches and single scenes may sometimes be rehearsed to better advantage when only those immediately concerned are present. During the week immediately preceding the final performance, rehearsals are held every evening, and the "dress" rehearsals on the last two or three evenings should be held in the hall or theatre where the play is to be acted.

It is impossible within the limits of a few pages, to give detailed instructions regarding staging and acting; but there are one or two general directions which it is well for the actors to keep in mind:

For those who are taking part in the play the all-important thing is that they should *feel* the parts that they are acting. The actor who loses himself in his part is scarcely conscious of his audience, and he has no temptation to declaim. He speaks naturally, usually in a conversational tone, and he gives free expression to his emotions. "Did you see Kean in Othello?" some one asked Kemble. "No," replied Kemble, "I did not see Mr. Kean. I saw Othello." The student who enters so completely into the play that he forgets himself in the part that he is acting is likely, on the whole, to prove a better actor than the student who merely recites his lines. His speech is less hurried; his acting is more natural; he does not make unnecessary movements, and he does not let his eyes wander from the stage to the audience. He must, however, always bear in mind that his speech must be heard by the audience. This necessitates clear enunciation and proper voice-control; and

the actor must always occupy a position on the stage that will enable the audience to hear him.

On the mechanical side, in staging a play it is safer for the amateur to err on the side of simplicity rather than make his production too elaborate. The scenery and the stage-furnishings should be of the simplest. Most of the text-books on dramatics give directions for making stage settings of plain and cheap materials. In modern play-production, footlights and spotlights are sparingly used, and the stage is lighted from the wings and from above. Most amateur producers are troubled as to "make-up"; but for most plays very little make-up is required,—only enough to prevent the face from appearing too pale. But for these and all other details relating to the staging of the play, the stage-manager may be relied upon, and there are many books on dramatics which may be consulted by the amateur.

The following are a few of the well-known books on the subject:

Shakespeare for Community Players by Roy Mitchell. J. M. Dent and Sons, Toronto

Practical Stage-Directing for Amateurs, by Emerson Taylor. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

How to Produce Amateur Plays, by Barrett H. Clark. Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

Producing in Little Theatres, by Clarence Stratton. Henry Holt & Co., New York.

Book for Shakespeare Plays and Pageants, by O. L. Hatcher. E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

Play Production for Amateurs, by F. H. Koch. University of North Carolina Extension Bulletin.